

## Startpage

### Preface

As some of you have already noticed, I program in [Python](#) on the [Alligator Browser](#). It should be very different from the [Firechrome](#) models. A focus is e.g. in the [private sphere and data protection](#). So far I had used the [duckduckgo.com](#) (ddg) search engine, but it has some disadvantages which I would like to describe here only very briefly. There's a lot duckduckgo does right, and it's better than the big G search, but it won't be implemented in the next versions of the Alligator browser. I'll explain the reasons briefly here.

The Alligator Browser [uses almost no Javascript](#) anymore, so Javascript is still embedded in the code, but I still use about 3% of it. I only have this for Bandcamp and Twitter and am working on solutions to use these services differently. This means that I always have Javascript turned off. Unfortunately ddg doesn't work so well without Javascript. Yes, I know there are [shortcuts I could learn](#) by heart, but I don't want that. With [Vim alone I'm more than satisfied](#).

In addition, important things that I need for my daily work do not work in the ddg. I can't display pictures. However, I often need this function if I have to compare a computer game cover, for example. The error with mpv and the duckduckgo links seems to have changed the days. Nevertheless no thumbnails are shown. As last critical point I see that the duckduckgo servers are located in America and thus cross European borders. This bothers me personally, because I can't be sure that American secret services will access my search queries or, in the worst case, even store them. I have nothing to hide and there is no reason to monitor my person without reason.

### Research

I then spent some time researching which [alternatives](#) were still available. There is not much left. Unfortunately [SearchX is blocked by big G](#). Metagear is [incredibly ugly](#) and comes from Germany (and shows german search results) and then I can ask a postman if he can find me some information. Germany has no significant relevance in the global digital development. Swisscows is not in Europe and shows a blanc page in the Alligator Browser. Qwant is even uglier than Metager and knows in which country I am and is (include) [sponsored by Axel Springer SE](#). I don't want to see German results because I'm in this country right now. I search and work only in the English language. Very rarely do I read in my native language. I have already discussed Duckduckgo above. Mojeek is in United Kingdom and after the [Brexit also no longer in the EU](#). The last alternative (at the moment) is [startpage.com](#). The servers are located in Europe (& America) and also all other important functions work fluently.

### Testing

To test if Startpage.com works in the Alligator Browser I replaced the search string `searchEngine = 'https://eu.startpage.com/do/dsearch/?q='` with the one from duckduckgo. First I test the most important functions for me, video and images.

Web Images Videos

Relevant

Popular

Recent

Any length

Short

Medium

Long

Notice: it is not possible to watch videos without javascript



3:06

Of Monsters and Men - Alligator (Lyric Video)

5,766,204 views • Fri, May 3, 2019

Alligator (Official Lyric Video) Song available everywhere now:

<https://OMAM.Ink.to/Alligator> Connect with Of Monsters And Men: ...

9:06

Alligator Vs Crocodile

284,573 views • Thu, Nov 15, 2018

Have you ever wondered what the differences are between alligators and crocodiles? Here we distinguish 10 main differences between these two massive and ...



What It's Like to Have a Pet Alligator

10,034,829 views • Tue, Oct 16, 2018

From bathing to feeding to cleaning in this video I share with you my day-to...

Alligator Browser 0.30 (Alpha)

Videos work quite well. Even if the thumbnails are not displayed sequentially and this menu up disturbs me a little. If I want to search for relevant, popular or videos in different lengths I can also use youtube.com. Even if that's the message that you can't use the videos without Javascript, it's possible with the Alligator browser. I just need the link, a thumbnail and maybe some short information.



Alligator Browser 0.30 (Alpha)

The pictures also work, but there are still these superfluous possibilities of selection. Normally the dark background is white, but I use the Dark Theme which I will talk about again.

## Settings

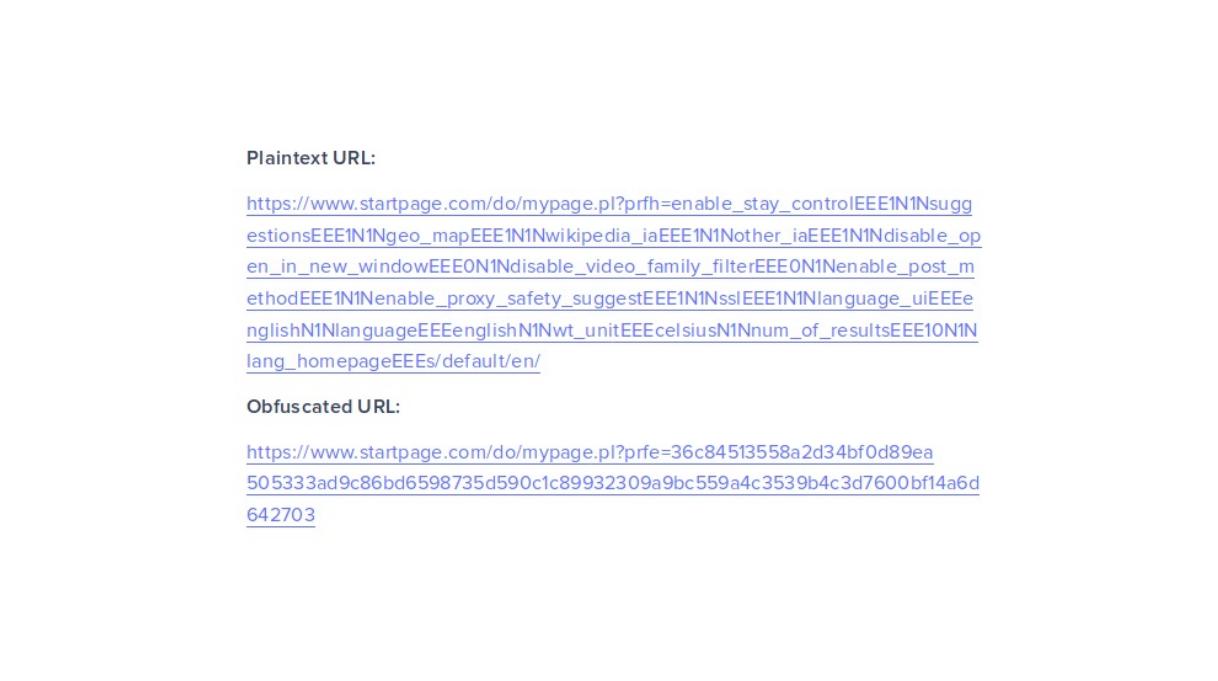
Now there are some settings in the startpage.com search which I, from the point of view of a computer scientist, find superfluous. I don't say anything against the interface language, search language, homepage search mode and the homepage theme. I find these functions useful. I find the show switch to startpage.com popup intrusive. I think that a good search engine can do without something like this. I can do without the search functions search suggestions, geographical maps, Wikipedia instant answers and other instant answers. In my opinion, only Celsuis should be used, because I find the [American fidgeting with the metric system simply ridiculous](#). Just because this country is so backward doesn't mean all Startpage search engine users have to suffer.

In my opinion you should set the search results to 10 entries, everything that is found underneath has mostly nothing more to do with the search term. The worst feature I can imagine is that

Startpage wants to open a new tab. It's bad enough that there are always so many tabs open and the Alligator browser doesn't allow that. The video family filter doesn't interest me and I don't believe in filtering the internet according to certain specifications. When children and teenagers want to find something on the internet, they find it through channels other than a simple search engine and Whatsapp and Instagram or friends deliver the best results. The two functions use post vs get and show proxy settings can remain implemented. Something I would also like to have implemented as fixed (in the Alligator) are these last two functions. Search results should not be filtered and I want the servers to be in the EU.

In the last section of the settings you can save your settings without a cookie. Unfortunately nothing is shown without Javascript. In Firefox you can display both links.

*By default, settings are stored in an anonymous browser cookie. If you prefer to not use cookies, please use the URL below (instead of the "Save" button) to access Startpage.com based on your preferences.*



**Plaintext URL:**

```
https://www.startpage.com/do/mypage.pl?prfh=enable\_stay\_control&nsuggestions&geo\_map&wikipedia\_ia&other\_ia&enable\_open\_in\_new\_window&disable\_video\_family\_filter&enable\_post\_method&enable\_proxy\_safety\_suggest&ssl&language\_ui&english&languageEnglish&wt\_unit=celsius&num\_of\_results=10&lang\_homepage/default/en/
```

**Obfuscated URL:**

```
https://www.startpage.com/do/mypage.pl?prfe=36c84513558a2d34bf0d89ea505333ad9c86bd6598735d590c1c89932309a9bc559a4c3539b4c3d7600bf14a6d642703
```

The links could now be used as bookmarks in another browser, which is unfortunately not desired in the Alligator browser. I toyed a bit with the two links and my source code, but couldn't get a satisfactory result. Since no cookies are stored in my browser, this is made even more difficult. At some point I [wrote to the Twitter account of startpage](#) and got an answer pretty quickly. Then I wrote a mail to the service team. They talked to the technicians. Unfortunately this cannot be implemented right now and, if I understood that correctly, it already existed in a similar form (*custom plugin*). I will not reproduce the original wording of the mails here, because I respect the privacy of other people. Anyway, it's not possible right now. Since I'm not willing to give up my idea, I lobby a little with this article and see if I can get some feedback or other ideas from the net.

## Conclusion

As I mentioned above, I will not give up my idea until I have found something better. Unfortunately, startpage.com is the best alternative of the search engines so far, halfway repeating the privacy of the users. Unfortunately I can't determine which features should be implemented and which should not. Neither do I work for startpage, nor do I have any other possibility to have a significant influence, because I don't know any employees from the upper floors. That a human reads this article from the company I consider very unlikely. But somehow I am also dissatisfied with the overall situation of the current search engine on the market. Big G almost has a monopoly and doesn't have to worry about this market dominance. Just as with other products, far too many developers have become dependent instead of releasing their own products. Centralization is always a bad idea in computer science.